

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BAGHDA 01274 220633Z
ACTION NEA-11

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6356
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 1274

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, PINR, IZ
SUBJ: NEW IRAQI AMBASSADOR TO LONDON

REF BAGHDAD 1267

1. HISHAM IBRAHIM AL-SHAWI, NEW IRAQI AMBASSADOR TO LONDON, IS A FORMER MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND MINISTER OF STATE. SHAWI IS FROM A PROMINENT SUNNI MUSLIM FAMILY AND IS RELATED TO THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE, THE PRESIDENT OF AL-MUSTANSIRIYA UNIVERSITY AND THE HEAD OF THE IRAQI SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH FOUNDATION. SHAWI HAS BEEN THE IRAQI DELEGATE TO SEVERAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES, INCLUDING THE IAEA. DROPPED FROM THE CABINET IN EARLY 1977, HE WAS SIDELINED AS AMBASSADOR AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. A STRONG ARAB NATIONALIST, SHAWI IS NOT REPEAT NOT A MEMBER OF THE IRAQI BAATH PARTY.

2. SHAWI WAS SLATED TO GO TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND IN MAY 1977 WAS ACTUALLY NAMED FOR THE UN PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE JOB BY DECREE. AT THE LAST MOMENT, HOWEVER, HIS ASSIGNMENT WAS CHANGED TO THAT OF CHIEF OF PROTOCOL FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL DIWAN. THAT POSITION, WHILE LARGELY CEREMONIAL, DID BRING HIM INTO CLOSE CONTACT WITH ALL MEMBERS OF THE PRESENT IRAQI LEADERSHIP.

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3. A GENTLEMAN OF THE OLD SCHOOL, SHAWI IS AN ARAB CLASSICIST AND FORMER PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE. HE RECEIVED HIS BA FROM OXFORD UNIVERSITY. HE IS FORMAL AND SPEAKS BOTH ENGLISH AND ARABIC IN AN AFFECTED MANNER.

4. COMMENT: SHAWI IS A SUAVE AND EDUATED PROFESSIONAL WHO

SEEMS WELL-FITTED FOR THE JOB OF IMPROVING IRAQ'S IMAGE
WITH THE BRITISH PUBLIC. ALTHOUGH HIS PERSONAL INFLUENCE
IN BAGHDAD WAS IN DECLINE FOR SEVERAL YEARS AND ALTHOUGH
HE LACKS THE APPROPRIATE PARTY CREDENTIALS, THE RELATIONSHIPS
DEVELOPED DURING HIS RECENT ASSIGNMENT TO THE PRESIDENCY
SHOULD MAKE HIM A USEFUL INTERMEDIARY. WHILE HE IS UNLIKELY
TO INFLUENCE THE IRAQI POSITION ON ANY IMPORTANT ISSUES,
HIS APPOINTMENT TO LONDON REFLECTS IRAQ'S INTEREST IN PLACING
A GLOSS OF MODERATION AND CIVILITY OVER ITS POLICIES.
PECK

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Message Attributes

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